

16th Street Community Health Center – Menomonee River Valley Revitalization

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The Sixteenth Street Community Health Center's Department of Environmental Health works to prevent health problems by addressing environmental conditions facing families in its service area—the near south side of Milwaukee—through a holistic and practical approach. Its service area has the highest concentration of contaminated properties (the largest brownfield site in Wisconsin), the highest population density and some of the lowest income averages (with a high percentage of under-employed population) in the state.

As an initiative to improve the health of the community and restore the Menomonee River Valley, the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center obtained an urban forestry grant in 2002 to host a national design competition and create an urban forestry strategic plan for the Menomonee Valley.

The design competition challenged design experts to create new designs to restore and enhance the natural features and urban impact of the Menomonee Valley. Over 140 firms from around the world responded to the Request for Qualifications. Ultimately four teams were chosen to participate in contributing designs that integrated native landscaping and vegetative species diversity, increased tree canopy coverage, restoration of riparian corridors, water quality, storm water management and native wildlife diversity. The winning firm, Wenk Associates, provided detailed designs for how the ecological restoration, open space and public access will look in the 21st century and how it will be integrated into new developments slated for the valley.

The second part to this grant was the creation of an urban forestry strategic plan for the valley. Today, within this 1500-acre urban river valley, the urban forest is severely depleted and the urban tree canopy is lacking, according to a 1996 ecological analysis conducted by American Forests. According to a baseline analysis conducted by the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Geography Department and the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, only 3.7 percent of the valley is covered with urban tree canopy.

The Menomonee River and Valley are perceived to have little or no recreational and ecological appeal and the majority of the land within the valley either

stands vacant or is under-utilized for storage of sand, salt, coal and junked vehicles. Furthermore, neighborhood residents surrounding the valley continue to struggle with impaired air quality, ozone action days and increased emissions from vehicles on the maze of freeways immediately around the valley.

The urban forestry strategic plan created a new, coordinated, coherent valley-wide vision of sustainable Best Management Practices to guide urban forestry restoration and enhancement of the Menomonee River Valley. These Best Management Practices are being marketed under the auspices of the Menomonee Valley Sustainable Design Guidelines, which offer property owners and developers a systematic framework for including sustainability principles in their projects. To obtain a copy of the sustainable design guidelines for the Menomonee Valley, call Ben Gramling at 414-672-1315, extension 374.

Call Mary Beth Driscoll at 414-672-1315, extension 270, to request a copy of their publication describing the design competition. The document will soon be posted on the Web at www.renewthevalley.org. For more information on Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, check out their Web site at www.sschc.org/. Developers and businesses can learn more about opportunities for locating and investing in the valley by calling Menomonee Valley Partners at 414-274-4655. ♻



Village of Clinton

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the village forestry board and to implement a forestry ordinance for the village. It required a comprehensive community urban forestry plan and also called for a village forester to provide technical expertise. Mr. Dave Brown, a park board member who had recently become a certified master gardener, was named village forester.

Clinton worked with DNR's urban forestry program to obtain copies of other similar urban forestry plans and used these to help draft such a plan for Clinton. It was approved by the forestry board and then adopted by the village board in August 2002. The plan required a tree inventory on all public lands, so in summer 2002 a computerized residential terrace tree

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